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CHAWNER

PROVE ALL THINGS

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PROVE ALL THINGS;

*hold fast that which is good.*

*I Thessalonians, 21.*

*he not busy being born is busy dying.*

A PAPER READ AT THE FIRST MEETING

OF

THE RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION SOCIETY

EMMANUEL COLLEGE

BY

WILLIAM CHAWNER

*Master*

*Ex Libris*  
C. K. OGDEN

*Privately printed*

# PROVE ALL THINGS

A PAPER READ AT THE FIRST MEETING  
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EMMANUEL COLLEGE

BY

WILLIAM CHAWNER

*Master*

THE CHURCH TIMES.

May 14, 1909

Much distress has been caused at a large and important College by the publication of a pamphlet by the Master, in which he details his views on religion. Their somewhat elementary nature shows that he cannot have devoted much time—or at any rate much study—to the question, and his action has caused needless pain to both teachers and learners in the College, who are not prepared to see the whole supernatural element of Christianity thrown overboard without a protest. These inconsiderate utterances are much to be deplored.

*With the Master of Emmanuel's  
Compliments.*

EMMANUEL LODGE,  
CAMBRIDGE.

7 May, 1909.

So indifferent are most people to the search  
after truth, that they occupy themselves  
rather with what lies ready to hand.

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## PROVE ALL THINGS

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οὕτως ἀταλαίπωρος τοῖς πολλοῖς ἡ ζήτησις τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ  
ἐτοίμα μᾶλλον τρέπονται. THUCYDIDES i, 20.

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing. PROVERBS xxv, 2.

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WHAT? Whence? Whither? Man's nature, his origin,  
his destiny—these are subjects that have excited the  
curiosity and stirred the emotions of the human race  
since it first raised itself above the level of the beasts.  
Is Wordsworth right when he tells us that

Trailing clouds of glory we do come  
From God who is our home?

What is the next stage when we quit this bank and shoal  
of time? Shall we say with Matthew Arnold that man,  
vain man,

Builds himself of second life  
I know not what, I know not where.

These and the like are questions to which most religions,  
certainly the Christian religion as we know it, profess to  
give a precise and definite answer—an answer in the case  
of Christianity based upon an infallible authority whether  
of book or institution or person. If we do not accept that  
authority, how little, if anything, do we know!

We are born into this world apparently without any  
initiative or choice of our own, thrown upon its shores, as  
Lucretius says, like the shipwrecked mariner, *navita nudus*,



*a naked sailor, cast up by the cruel waves.*

*saevis proiectus ab undis.* We are introduced into a society of beings like ourselves, who hold the most different and indeed contradictory views on these questions, and we are left, as it seems, in the dark with but vague indications and uncertain clues to find our way to the light of truth. "What is truth?" said jesting Pilate and waited not for an answer." That has always seemed to me a harsh and hasty verdict of Bacon. It may well be that the question was serious enough. It may well be that he recognised in his perplexity, as many have before and since, that for beings finite and relative, as we are, there is no absolute truth, no ultimate body of doctrine, no rounded logical complete system, that can be comprehended in thought or set forth in words.

Certain it is that no such discovery has yet been made.

Truth is this to me and that to thee.

Experience shows that most men are ready to adopt (perhaps with some slight modifications due to personal idiosyncrasy) the religious ideas current in the place of their birth. And it cannot be denied that many who have been content to do this have been men of remarkable powers of mind. I remember that in one of his letters Lord Acton says that he had never at any time entertained any doubt with regard to any of the great dogmas of the Church. And he, you will remember, was a Roman Catholic. That is a truly astounding statement for a man of his encyclopaedic learning. And yet men of reflective minds who actually realise the firm conviction, with which the tenets of their own faith are held by learned and accomplished men of other religions, must have their moments of doubt and hesitation. Henry Martyn, the missionary in Persia, was so affected by this feeling that he had to satisfy himself of the evidences for Christianity by a course of apologetic study.

Even if we rule out all alien religions, what wide differences do we find within the limits of the Christian Churches! Could anything be further apart than the ignorant superstition of the priests of the Greek Church



and the philosophical tolerant comprehensive views of an English Broad Churchman? What a gulf between the emotional harangues of the Salvation Army and the pomp and ceremonious forms of the Roman Church and its Anglican imitators! Even within the English Church itself there are differences so great as almost to constitute separate religions. Who shall decide when doctors disagree? It is small wonder that in presence of such a conflict of opinion many abandon all attempts at a solution.

Even without transgressing the limits of orthodox belief, this society might find ample scope for its work. But in my opinion any such limitation would deprive it of most of its usefulness. During the last half-century the outstanding fact in the religious history of the chief nations of Western Europe has been the growing indifference and hostility shown towards orthodox Christianity by men of culture and learning and intelligence.

Look at Germany, the nation which in respect of trained intelligence stands highest in the world. It is true that the Kaiser himself both listens to sermons and preaches them, and the court gives its patronage to the Lutheran religion. But in Protestant states at all events it is not too much to say that the educated classes stand entirely aloof. The churches are half empty and the congregations consist of women only. In the Universities an interest in theological questions is confined to the candidates for the ministry and the Professors who teach them, and of the latter the larger part hold views which would not be tolerated in the English Church. The most eminent and most learned and most sane of their number—Adolf Harnack—in a course of lectures published not long ago and entitled *What is Christianity?* (*Das Wesen des Christenthums*) set forth his views on the subject in a popular form. And what does it amount to? To something like this. That the reported miraculous events in the life of Jesus, the Virgin Birth, Resurrection, and Ascension are unhistorical, have no adequate evidence.

"But the Easter faith" (he says) "is independent of the Easter appearances and of the empty grave." And he goes on to construct a theological system, accepting as a basis the teaching of Jesus and of Paul.

The condition of things in France is similar, but here the indifference we find in Germany becomes actual hostility. Except in a few districts such as Brittany the Church is the Church of women only. It is not uncommon for men to save appearances by making one communion in the year at Easter. This I believe entitles them to be buried with the rites of the Church. Unfortunately religion has become entangled with politics. To be Royalist is to be Catholic. The two parties mutually support one another, and Republicanism is identified with hostility to the Church. Mr J. E. C. Bodley, who has been long resident in France, has described the situation in an authoritative book which has almost become classical. It is a bar to promotion, he tells us, either in the Army or the Civil Service to be known to attend regularly at mass. It is an accepted tradition that the President of the Republic never pronounces the name of God in any public utterance. At the special instance of the Czar of Russia, on the occasion of his visit to Paris, the President for the first and only time went officially to the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame. Among other incidents he mentions that the Conseil-Général of the Sarthe, at its meeting in August, 1896, passed a vote of censure on the Inspector of primary schools at Le Mans for setting in an examination questions which implied the existence of a God<sup>1</sup>. Such intolerance is not excused by the plea that it is but a retaliation upon the orthodox of the treatment they formerly inflicted on the unbeliever. I do not defend it but adduce it as evidence that the nation as a whole is

<sup>1</sup> In a later course of Lectures on the Church in France, Mr Bodley discusses the abrogation in 1906 of the Concordat of 1801, which is in effect the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church. He comments upon "the indifference with which the population regards a revolution, the like of which has not taken place for a hundred years."

alienated from the Church. It is probably true, as Mr Bodley contends, that a minority imposes this narrow policy upon a majority who are indifferent but not intolerant.

In England the same tendency is seen in a less pronounced form. If I were asked what is the attitude of my countrymen at large towards orthodox Christianity I should answer: They are increasingly hostile or indifferent in proportion to their intelligence. Large numbers of those, who practise what may be called occasional conformity, are influenced by motives of consideration for the feelings of others, especially relations and friends, by the belief that for the masses religion is the most effective sanction for morality, by want of courage. Not long ago I read a volume of Mr Charles Booth, who has devoted a considerable portion of his life and large sums of money to the collection of statistics with regard to the economy, the religious and social life of the inhabitants of London. He is generally allowed to have accomplished this great work with impartial accuracy and thoroughness. In volume VII. of *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Third Series "Religious Influences," he writes as follows:

"The great masses of the people remain apart from all forms of religious communion, apparently untouched by the Gospel that with various differences of interpretation and application is preached from every pulpit. The female sex forms the mainstay of every religious assembly of whatever class." The men are not irreligious. "Atheism is rare. The humanitarianism of the clergy is approved of but their doctrinal teaching carries no weight. A liberalised form of Christianity makes no headway." In spite of the lack of religious influence (he goes on to say) "changes making for improvement are in progress, habits are becoming softened, the influence of education is making itself felt, intelligence is spreading, the range of interests is widening. Sunday is increasingly regarded as a day of recreation." This view is supported by the vote on the subject of education at the last Trades Union Congress.

The members of these Unions are the pick of the working-men, and take the lead in education and intelligence, but they care nothing for what is called definite dogmatic teaching. The numbers in favour of purely secular teaching were 1,400,000, against it 134,000, not one-tenth of the whole. One of the most sinister facts in the religion of Englishmen at the present day is that the dominant creed finds its chief support in the middle class, those Philistines on whom M. Arnold poured unceasing scorn, on their narrowness of view, their material ambitions, their imperviousness to the beauties of art and literature.

Let us look nearer home and take a glance at those institutions in which we have a more direct interest, our Universities and our Schools. What of Cambridge? What of our own College? Where are the evidences of the living power of Christianity? Are our chapels crowded? Do you flock to those services at which a sermon is preached? or do not the empty benches and manifest gaps in the congregation on these occasions bear witness to the small value you set on this element of public worship? Last Long Vacation we tried the experiment of making chapels completely voluntary, you probably know with what effect. Out of some 40 or 50 men in residence there was an average attendance of about one or two per diem for the first fortnight and after that the congregation completely failed. At Oxford and Cambridge the steadily diminishing number of candidates for Holy Orders tells the same tale. No doubt the value of clerical benefices has diminished in the last 30 or 40 years, but I repudiate the notion that such pecuniary considerations have had more than a subsidiary influence in bringing about this result. How shall they preach except they be sent? How shall they deliver their message if they have no message to deliver? This diminution in numbers has taken place even among our poll men who supply a large proportion of candidates for Holy Orders. But what of the other end of the scale? How few first class men desire this which ought to be the most coveted of offices! Apart from those who are elected to



fill the clerical office of Dean or Theological Lecturer, how seldom now does any fellow take orders ! It is not unfair to say that, in order to fill even these clerical offices, the intellectual standard of a fellowship has often been lowered. And this though a clerical fellow of any ability finds patronage and promotion, wins honours and emoluments with a rapidity unknown in any other profession.

Apart from these official defenders of the Church, what is the attitude towards Christianity of the vast majority of our senior resident members, our professors, fellows, readers, lecturers and teachers ? My answer would be : an attitude of more or less benevolent neutrality. Some are in open opposition. Many, Gallio-like, care not for these things. Many more have a real sympathy with much of the practical teaching of Christianity, though they cannot accept the dogmatic system on which it is supposed to be based. The convinced church member, the devout and regular worshipper, is so rare among our younger laymen that he may almost be regarded as a freak or sport of nature. External acquiescence in the *status quo* is almost universal. There is an occasional attendance at Sunday chapel and generally just so much conformity as to avoid an open breach with the official religion.

And what of our Schools ? The prevailing tone of public opinion on religious questions is reflected there too, but is controlled by artificial means. The Governors of our public schools are largely under clerical influence, or are led by motives of expediency to adopt a clerical policy. The layman, even the orthodox layman, has until recently been boycotted as a candidate for headmasterships ;—with the necessary result that the intellectual standard has been lowered, and inferior men have been put in command of a staff of masters, many of whom are their superiors in every respect except orthodoxy. Clever boys are acute observers and keen critics and are very much alive to the unsatisfactory situation thus created.

In the hasty survey I have made of a very wide field I do not pretend to have done more than touch upon a few

salient points and to have made some broad generalisations without waiting to specify exceptions and qualifications. If you have followed the thread of my argument, you will have seen that my purpose has been to show, that in the three leading nations of Western Europe there is something like a general revolt among men of intelligence against old-fashioned orthodoxy, that there is a feeling of unrest and uncertainty in the religious world, that these symptoms have shown themselves as conspicuously here as elsewhere, and that there is urgent need of such a society as you are founding to-day.

Indeed in my judgment nothing could be more unsatisfactory than the official attitude of the Colleges generally towards religious questions. A thoughtful and intelligent boy must have learnt even at school how grave are the objections that can be made to the orthodox system. On his arrival here he is faced by a conspiracy of silence. The truth of that system is assumed. He hears in chapel the arguments of its official defenders. There is no one to represent the other side. Unless his parents belong to some sect of nonconformists he is required to attend chapel. It may be that he has doubts and finds no help in the chapel service. It may be that he has convinced himself that the doctrines there taught are not true. In either case he has often to choose between two painful alternatives: he must attend a religious service which is to him meaningless or offensive, or must give pain to his parents and friends by an open profession of dissent. There seems to me no valid defence of this method of procedure. When you come from school to college you make the critical passage from boyhood to manhood. You come here to prepare yourselves for your life's work. One of the most important parts of that equipment is the formation of a reasoned view of the world and of your relation to it. You want all the help you can get in that difficult task. It is not enough to exhibit to you one solution and to leave you to work out for yourselves the difficulties that beset it. No one should be judge in his own cause. Even



in the writings of the most candid and fair-minded apologists it is a common experience to find the weak points of the arguments ignored and gaps covered over but not filled. It is my hope that this society will to a large extent supply the lack of impartial criticism. Cooperation is one of the great instruments of progress ; and I understand that you have so selected the members of your society as to secure representatives of every variety of opinion. Debate and the preparation for debate is one of the great clarifiers of thought.

It is obvious that such a society does not appeal to all. There are many who unhappily—or happily—for themselves feel no need of its assistance. They are content to accept their creed on authority. It is only the man with some intellectual force and logical power who feels the need to coordinate and harmonise his beliefs. Such men are the salt of the earth. To them Christianity itself owes its life and progress. Their criticism and even hostility has directed its development and saved it from stagnation and death.

Let me quit for a moment these general topics to congratulate you on the practical wisdom with which you have organised your society. The small number to which you have limited its members will facilitate real and intimate discussion and will discourage the epideictic displays of a large debating society. If I may make a suggestion I think you would do well not to confine yourselves to your regular small meetings for private debate but from time to time to invite distinguished persons from outside to read papers, which might also be followed by questions and discussion. To such meetings it would be natural to invite a larger audience and to include friends who are not members of the society.

On one other point I would lay some emphasis. You must express your opinions with absolute frankness. It is not to be expected that you will have formed mature judgments on every open question. Whether we allow it or no we all of us waver in our beliefs even on important points.

A man who never changes his opinions has probably no very important opinions to change. But whatever be the opinion, however narrowly orthodox, however bold in its heterodoxy—agnostic or atheistic—let it be propounded and discussed. The explicit statement of an extreme or intemperate view is probably the first step towards its abandonment.

Let me add a word on a kindred and often-debated subject. What policy shall be adopted by those of us who have come to doubt and distrust the creed in which we were brought up? Shall we avow our disagreement or shall we conform? There can be no general answer to the question. A right decision in each case depends upon circumstances, the position of the person concerned and the probable consequences of his action—immediate or remote. We are at first naturally reluctant to set up the standard of revolt and refuse allegiance to the faith which has given guidance and consolation to many men abler and better than ourselves. We shall all agree with Tennyson's lines in "In Memoriam" on this subject :

Leave thou thy sister when she prays  
Her early Heaven, her happy views,  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

It is justifiable at some sacrifice of consistency to spare to parents and friends the pain of an open breach.

On the other side there are considerations which must not be forgotten. It is by criticism and by attacks of unbelievers that religion has been purged and developed, that it has abandoned its material elements and become a spiritual creed. The Founder of Christianity himself said that he had not come to bring peace but a sword, and to set the members of a family one against the other, and precisely for this reason that he was attacking the established religion. It is a part of that truthfulness on which the whole fabric of society and civilisation rests that we should as a rule openly acknowledge what we believe to be true.

It had been my intention to mention in a brief and summary way some of those points in which the progress of modern thought and the discovery of new truth has brought us into conflict with traditional beliefs. All religions, which have had their origin in time, for that reason contain within themselves the seeds of future change if not of decay. They necessarily adopt the ideas of the age in which they take their rise and, in so far as those ideas are false or incomplete, the religion itself shares these defects. There have been two revolutions of thought in the last 400 years which have vitally affected men's attitude towards orthodox Christianity. The first was the overthrow of Ptolemaic astronomy. Our theological system was framed at a time when the earth was regarded as the centre of the universe, and was supposed to form a substantial portion of the whole. Now that we know that it is but a speck in the vast ocean of explored space and is but one of myriads of heavenly bodies, which (for all we know) may be inhabited by beings of higher intelligence and faculties superior to our own—under this new aspect the stupendous miracles of the incarnation and the atonement become a thousandfold more difficult to accept. In a similar way the doctrine of Evolution has changed the point of view from which all educated men regard many of the most important dogmas of Christianity. If the story related in the early chapters of Genesis is a myth or a poem—if the religious history of mankind is a history of development, of one long progress from the animal state to the highest point yet reached—then I ask what becomes of the argumentation of St Paul on the Fall and Original Sin and the Atonement and what becomes of the teaching the Church has founded upon it?

If time had allowed I should have gone on to say a word of other studies—whose results come more or less into conflict with orthodox beliefs—of Comparative Mythology and the Comparative Study of Religions, of other branches of Anthropology and of the results achieved by Tylor and Lubbock and Frazer (to mention three great

English names), of Old and New Testament Criticism, of the growing conviction which is penetrating the churches that the canons of criticism require us to abandon as unhistorical the miraculous events in the life of Jesus—the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection and Ascension. With regard to this point in particular I venture the prediction that before many years have elapsed those who adhere to the traditional view will be as few in number and as belated as the old-fashioned persons who still ask us to regard the first chapter of Genesis as a scientific treatise. But the limits of my allotted time compel me to forbear, and I will conclude these remarks with a protest and a confession.

My protest is against the method by which the Church professes to attain to truth on the most abstruse subjects. The scholastic teaching of the Middle Ages is justly discredited, but it is by a similar method that the dogmatic system of the Church is constructed. By *a priori* reasoning a series of propositions with regard to the infinite is logically deduced. The falsity of the method is shown by the antinomies, the contradictions, in which we find ourselves involved when we pursue it. The more profoundly we attempt to fathom the unfathomable and to define the undefinable, the more elaborately we build up the structure of our dogma—the less satisfactory is the result. In other subjects we rightly regard the *reductio ad absurdum* as a proof of the falsity of the proposition. In Theology alone is the contrary procedure allowed. These definitions of the nature and properties of the Deity, which are presented to us with all the formality and precision of a scientific deduction, have no right to any such authority. They are doubly mischievous when it is sought to impose them as a test upon teachers whether primary or of any other grade. They are full of interest as exercises of ingenuity, as flights of the imagination, instances of the untiring curiosity of man who, constantly baffled, returns again and again to the charge, and ceaselessly renews his efforts to penetrate the mystery of existence.



As I have pressed upon you the duty of frank openness of speech, I will try to practise that virtue myself. Amid the welter of conflicting opinions there is one point which seems to me fixed, one principle to which I constantly return with increasing satisfaction and growing certitude. There seems to me to be one element in our consciousness immediately given (as the phrase runs), intuitive, indefeasible. I mean the moral sense, the sense of duty, conscience, the categorical imperative whose right to command we admit even when we refuse our obedience. We find traces of it in the higher animals; it has ruled the lives of men of all faiths and no-faith; it inspired the creedless Japanese in the late war to acts of courage and self-sacrifice which Christians may have equalled, but have not surpassed; it was not discovered by Christianity; the noblest Greeks acknowledged the supremacy of this law which knows not the limits of space or time,

οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε καχθές ἀλλ' αἰεί ποτε  
 ζῆ ταῦτα κοῦδεῖς οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου φάνη.

*Antigone: 456-7.*

I can imagine that those, who are accustomed to the fulness of detail with which orthodox teachers satisfy our curiosity, and to the confidence with which they answer our questions, may be inclined to say that such a cold negative, shadowy creed has no attractions for them. They crave the warmth, the life, the emotion which are kindled by the belief in a personal relation with a divine man or a divine woman. I can only answer that they are within their rights, if these doctrines are true. If they are false, those who adopt them are like the victims of the opium-habit, who drug themselves to escape from the world of reality to a world of their own imagination. We may wish that things were otherwise, but it is idle to complain of a condition for which we are not responsible, which we are obliged to accept, and which may have some wise purpose.

We all of us feel the need of some ideal—a faith—a religion it may be, which shall help us in our struggle with evil and our effort to attain the good. But no man lives to himself. Religious emotion is a personal matter, but it is

*now or yesterday they have their being  
 everlastingly; and none can tell  
 the hour that saw their birth.*

strengthened and steadied by the sympathy of others, and its very existence is a recognition of the links that unite man to man and to the Power that rules the world. Your society will not have been founded in vain if it supplies this bond of sympathy, if it stimulates you to think out for yourselves an interpretation of phenomena, a reasoned and reasonable view of the world, which may give unity and consistency and happiness to your lives.







*Amfil*

A SUPPLEMENT  
TO  
A PAPER ENTITLED  
PROVE ALL THINGS

*being a selection of letters relating to the  
subject of the paper*

Ex Libris  
C. K. OGDEN

*With the Master of Emmanuel's  
Compliments.*

*Delayed by serious illness*

EMMANUEL LODGE,  
CAMBRIDGE.

## PREFATORY NOTE

A FEW months ago I printed a paper I had read before a Religious Discussion Society in College and circulated it among members of my own College and a few private friends. I have since sent a copy to a considerable number of persons who have applied for it. I am well aware that it contains nothing new or original. I circulated the paper partly as a manifesto, partly in the hope that I might elicit some sympathy with the views expressed in it. In addition to formal acknowledgements I have received some 70 letters in which the writers indicated approval or disapproval. Many were quite brief but not a few dealt with the subject in an interesting way, and it seemed to me that those who had read the pamphlet would probably be glad to have an opportunity of reading these letters also.

I have divided the letters into two classes and have distinguished from the rest those written by residents holding some official position in Cambridge. The former class numbered twenty-six and I should have liked to print them all as giving a complete conspectus of official opinion within the circle of my own acquaintance. Three of my correspondents preferred that their letters should not be included. I do not think that their absence affects the general impression conveyed by the collection. Twenty-two out of the twenty-six letters were written by Professors or Fellows holding a tutorship or lectureship or ladies holding similar offices at the ladies' Colleges. The re-

maining four were from men whose position would give weight to their opinion.

Considerations of space alone prevent me from including all the letters. From those of non-residents I have made a typical selection. The authors include a headmaster, two former headmasters, two assistant-masters, a scientific expert, a barrister, a distinguished surgeon, five clergymen—three of the Church of England and two others.

It would have been in every way more satisfactory had I been able to add the name of the writer in each case; but a glance at some of the letters (and these by no means the least interesting) will show that this procedure was not possible.

I have not attempted to classify the letters in each part: they are placed in the order in which they were received. In one case I have, with the consent of the writer, omitted some sentences of a personal nature.

I have been touched and pleased by the sympathetic tone of the letters of Cambridge friends who do not accept my point of view and in this connexion I venture to quote as not inapposite some wise words spoken by the Bishop of Winchester in a recent sermon before the University. "The privileged atmosphere of the University," he says, "is thirty years in advance of that which prevails in quarters where there is little reading and less thought, where church teaching on questions of controversy is rarely given (and then only at secondhand), derived maybe from the pages of some safe apologetical authority composed some forty years ago. The thought of the church is still too often peopled with old spectres."

Many of the letters tempt to further comment but I refrain; they are better left to tell their own tale. I will however conclude with a short story which has a moral of its own. A few days ago I was approached by a journalist who with obvious hesitation explained that he had come on a delicate errand. He had learned that in a paper read before a College Society I had professed myself an atheist. It was a matter of public interest and might become a



matter of public discussion and he wished to know whether I desired to make any communication to the press on the subject. I dismissed him with a curt rebuke.

The incident, trivial in itself, exhibits in a graphic way the mental attitude of the average Englishman who is unable to distinguish between the advocacy of atheism and the rejection of some of those elements of popular Christianity which are most open to attack.

W. CHAWNER.

EMMANUEL COLLEGE LODGE,  
*October 15, 1909.*

## PART I

### LETTERS FROM RESIDENTS

1. I wish to thank you for your pamphlet. It interested me greatly, and (I confess it is a surprise) I find myself in complete agreement. The only thing in it which I am inclined to question is the leaving of our sisters at their prayers. I have always done it, but I wonder whether it is right, whether we ought not to treat women as well as men like reasonable human beings who can presumably bear to face the truth and be the better for it.

But of course that is not the point of the paper—and may I wish all success of the kind you desire to your Society?

2. I am very grateful for the copy of your paper on Religious Beliefs which you have been so good as to send me. I have read it with the greatest interest. Your treatment of the subject and the courage which was necessary for a man in your position to let us read your inner thoughts command my admiration.

There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds.

3. I have read your paper "Prove all Things" with a great deal of interest. It is certainly a very remarkable pronouncement coming as it does from the Head of a College. Your summary of the state of religious belief is probably pretty nearly correct. I have not sufficient knowledge of the facts to dispute it; though, had I been called upon to state my own impressions, the statement would have been in some respects more qualified and less sweeping than yours.

I imagine that the purpose of your statement is to justify a free discussion of religious questions. It is a reply to the old answer beginning "wiser heads than yours my boy" with which the doubter or enquirer used to be met. But while this is its intention I think its effect will be different. It is not so much a reply to the old position, as an inversion of it. It is to the other, the orthodox, side that we must say "Discussion is useless; 'in proportion to their intelligence,' educated men reject all that sort of thing." I do not think that this is your attitude; but I do think that it is a fairly common attitude at the present time, that the spirit of it is hostile to genuine enquiry, and that the stress which you lay upon your view of the tendency of opinion is apt to foster this spirit.

I fear that the one fixed principle on which you rely (p. 15) is regarded by many able writers of the day with more dislike than miracles and about equal contempt.

4. Allow me to thank you for the copy of "Prove all Things." I have read it with admiration and pleasure, and if I may say so, I most heartily support—I think in every detail—the principles you have so well expressed in it.

5. I have to thank you for your prompt and kind reply to my note. I am glad to have the paper because I feel just as strongly as you do that these questions ought to be thrashed out and not met with a "conspiracy of silence." I shall never cease to be thankful that I was brought up to regard Christianity as a progressive revelation, the final test of its truth being, not the Bible, nor the Church, but its practical working out in one's own experience and that of others. For this reason I have always felt that Christianity has everything to gain and nothing to lose by the fullest possible discussion and that those who would base its claims on any other authority are doing it a mistaken kindness.

At the same time I cannot forget that Emmanuel is a Christian institution by foundation and traditions, and its present practice, to my mind, stamps it with the same

character. In support of this view one has only to recall the fact that each Fellow at his admission undertakes to promote its interests as a place of "religion," this somewhat vague term being carefully defined by the admission formula which you use, in common with all your predecessors I suppose, whereby each Fellow is admitted in the name of "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Whether you as Head of this institution, ought to lead the discussion by an attack on the very principles which it was founded to promote and to which it still officially adheres, is a question which I personally should have answered in the negative.

The same kind of argument seems to me to apply to the very difficult question of College Chapels. I feel very strongly that a voluntary system, if it had the sympathy and active support of the College authorities, would be the ideal one. Chapels always were voluntary for me. I accepted them as "College family worship" and found them helpful. But the question is really one of College policy and I feel that all who are responsible for the maintenance of the discipline ought carefully to refrain from saying what is bound to embarrass those who have to administer the system.

In conclusion may I say that I should be truly sorry if anything in the preceding letter should seem to reflect on the motives which prompted your action. Strong as is my objection to the course of action which you have adopted, I respect your motives as thoroughly sincere and admire the courage which has led you to take what you knew would be a painful, difficult and unpopular step.

6. I appreciate your kindness in sending me a copy of your address. I have read it with interest. It cannot fail to do good; and your Society is to be congratulated on starting under so thoughtful a *προπεμπτικόν*.

7. I thank you for the copy of your paper. From the "conspiracy of silence" you seem to have seceded. I have often enough marvelled at its perfection, not as a mere

silence but as being, curiously, a *tacit* one: and what should happen now that it is broken I cannot conjecture. But there is no need for me to try, perhaps.

8. (a) I have to thank you very much for the extremely interesting paper "Prove all Things" which you have been kind enough to send me, and which added an extra charm to a quiet hour spent this afternoon in the garden, out of reach of the wind. I fear, however, that it

"Will doom you to the zealot's ready Hell,

"Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well."

(b) I have been screwing up courage to ask you for a second copy of "Prove all Things," and I am at last at the striking-point. If you can spare me another copy, I should be glad to send it out to —, who, I know, would read it with great interest. I cannot part with my own copy, in which I have already stuck the remarks of *The Church Times* of 14 May.

9. Let me thank you sincerely for sending me your extremely interesting paper. I heartily wish that the example of candour given in it may be followed in every one of the Colleges. \* \* \* \* \*

I might add much more, that it is a heart-sorrow to me as Tutor of a College which has more than the usual proportion of candidates for ordination that I feel rightly or wrongly that silence is the only course which I can adopt in speech with my pupils on the one subject which should come nearest to them and demands honest speech. I am well aware that the result is wholly bad and produces the materialism against which our spiritual authorities profess hostility. Until they substitute something more lifegiving than Ritual or Inspiration I see no possibility but the entire abandonment of religion by thinking undergraduates. Particularly deplorable is the position of the ordinand condemned either to a rude awakening after ordination or to a life of insincerity and detachment from the mind of the unclerical world. At my College we do not lack so-called "critical" sermons, but they strike me as insincere, as



they invariably pull up at the last ditch and convey in the stereotyped phrases that everything stands as it did. My impression is that undergraduates were never more interested in religious discussion than now and never less disposed to accept religion at ecclesiastical hands. It is a matter of indifference to them whether they listen to a "Catholic" Anglican or a Baptist minister. They come away committed to no views. The times suggest a comparison with the 16th century days when "Germany" invaded Cambridge and I think and I hope that we are on the eve of a similar Reformation of religion.

10. Very many thanks for your paper, which I have read with very much interest.

The real difficulty about "full discussion," "frankness," and discussions which start from the platform that there is no standard of orthodoxy is that what is bracing and suitable to one person at a particular time is less suitable and stimulating to another person or to the same person at another time. And the trouble is that the undergraduate for whom free discussion would be stimulating won't go to it, while others who haven't got enough brain-stuff of their own to make a universe for their own selves are given fragments of disconnected philosophies instead of plain repairs to their inherited religion.

What I am really thinking of is the — Society as compared with various (more or less) Church College Societies which I see occasionally. The — Society is quite free, but it seems to have dropped in the process all belief in first principles (even those of Pragmatism) except a belief in the narrowness of Anglicanism. The other societies do seem to be more or less animated by a desire to aim at trying to find "true religion."

Bacon's view of S. John's Pilate may be unfair exegesis, but Pilate as Bacon sketches him was a person who was unlikely to get hold even of such fragments of reality as he might have been able to collect, and the College religious discussion society that has no standards is too often disposed to adopt the *dogma* that there is no answer.



The future of Religion in general and the Christian Religion in particular is, I think, exceedingly dark and it is amazing how ignorant of this many of the Undergraduates are, especially of those who contemplate taking Orders. It is all a question of mental digestion, of what the ancient Christian organisation can mentally digest: who knows how much they will succeed in assimilating?

11. Please accept my best thanks for having so kindly sent me a copy of your paper for the Religious Discussion Society at Emmanuel. I have read it with the greatest interest, and I feel in the fullest agreement with what you say on p. 15 about the indisputable authority of conscience.

But the whole question with which the paper deals, seems to me one of the most difficult, as well as the most important, we have to do with.

12. I thank you for your little pamphlet. I have read it, and I should like some day to have a talk with you about it. One cannot be a *Fid. Def.* on a card 3 inches by 4, even tho' His Majesty manages it on a sixpence. But I own to a *Religio Medici* which is perhaps not greatly divagant from that of Sir Thomas. I am no lover of creeds and dogmas and think it wiser to skirt round such quicksands, holding that at the Great Examination we shall receive higher marks for our deeds than for our beliefs. I utter no damnation clauses and have no match in my pocket for any *auto-da-fé*. But Christianity is the best form of religion I know and without it one does not seem to get reverence, a quality not without its points, which appears to be rather rare in these days.

13. Will you think me forward and impertinent if I write to tell you how much I appreciate your pamphlet "Prove all Things" and sympathise with its contents? I only wish it was published: it would do a lot of good. May I beg a copy for myself, if you have one to spare?

14. I am much obliged to you for sending me your address "Prove all Things," which I have read with very

great interest. I admire, if I may venture to say so, not only the *tone* of the paper and the spirit which it inculcates, but the frank and unaffected manner in which the question is presented; though of course when one comes to deal with different types of people, it is not so easy to be sincere as appears at the outset! I mean that personal relations have a way of cutting across philosophical intentions. Still people ought to be advised to be sincere at all costs; and a very little more sincerity in statement and discussion would save many misunderstandings.

15. Many thanks for your kindness in sending me a copy of your paper. I read it with the greatest interest.

I know you set store by frankness so I will say at once that I did not agree with all of it but I am very glad to have had it.

16. I am greatly obliged to you for sending me your paper read to the Religious Discussion Society at Emmanuel.

May I say that I am cordially in sympathy with you in making such an outspoken review of the situation. In some details I am not quite sure that my experience altogether agrees: especially, I do not feel to the same extent that undue silence prevails here on religious difficulties. I do not often hear sermons, but when I do, they usually speak of the doubts with which the schoolboy's faith is assailed when he comes up here. Some of the professorial lecturing, I gather, takes a very critical tone, especially on the Old Testament. And, on the non-official side, there are philosophical and theological lectures given by free-lances to which the men go in flocks.

But no doubt it is the case that the mass of men are untouched by such stimuli to enquiry, and shift between thoughtless conformity and indifference due to indolence. And certainly their seniors do not do much to help them. I suppose the majority of us are dissatisfied with the quasi-compulsory chapel-system, so far as it survives, but don't care to tilt at it—our least discreditable motive for re-

fraining being personal regard for a few of our colleagues who believe in it.

The Emmanuel Society ought to be of much value.

17. It was very good of you to send me your "Prove all Things." I have read it with great satisfaction, and if I may say so with admiration of your honesty and courage. I am sure this plain speaking will help and support many people.

I am glad you have spoken out about the "official attitude" of the Colleges "towards religious questions." I once started the idea of making Chapel really voluntary at —, and was regarded as a harmful lunatic. Your paragraph beginning "my protest is against the method by which the Church," etc. is very cheering and wholesome. I am sure your pamphlet will make you many friends and sympathisers.

18. I read with much admiration and respect your lecture to the Religious Discussion Society lent me by a friend. I wish that when I was an undergraduate any one in authority had given the least indication that it was not necessarily a crime to think on these matters; I believe the moral gain to all of us would have been immense.

Is it too much to ask that I might have a copy to keep? or better still, perhaps you will tell me where one can be had, if they *are* to be had.

19. Many thanks for sending to me your pamphlet. I have read it—rather hastily, and therefore do not venture to criticise—but I feel as the dwellers in "An Englishman's Home" must have felt when the shell burst in their midst, and shattered their walls to pieces. I will write you again on the subject—or perhaps talk to you.

20. I had read your very interesting pamphlet, and thank you heartily for the copy you send. As to "agreement," I really do not know my own mind on some of the theoretical and practical questions involved. But I am quite sure that nothing but good can come from straight-

forward sincerity, and that of all things the chief at this moment, for the good of our young men, is to encourage them to be serious.

21. Many thanks for your paper "Prove all Things." I have read it with attention and with much interest. It is characteristically frank and honest—specially welcome therefore in these days when "Mr Facing-Both-Ways" is so much in evidence. I agree with much that you say. The Christian Religion during its long history has accreted superstitions and elements at least unnecessary. Then it is also true that many of the narratives in Scripture, formerly accepted as authentic histories, cannot be accepted as such by those trained in the schools of Modern History. Straightforward thinkers and sincere men find themselves in a difficult position; they wish their thoughts and their devotions to be in harmony, but they hear much in prayers, hymns and sermons which appears to them doubtful, perhaps absurd.

Your counsel to such men is admirable so far as it suffices. "Cling to the idea of duty, yield yourselves to the supremacy of conscience." I do not deny that there are men of strong character and self-respect to whom this seems enough. "To no faith go they a-begging." And this class of men has also its saints. But to most men the categorical imperative is cold comfort if alone. They crave for some outward support, for some assurance that it is "well with the righteous," and that some higher power is on their side especially when they find the path of duty hard. They desire a hope and an assurance that *final* victory awaits goodness.

I gather from your paper that you would agree with what I have said. But I gather that you doubt whether cultivated men can now find help in the Christian Faith as it is usually taught. It must be remembered however that it contains—with a good deal that is superfluous—most of the thoughts and consolations which go to make up religion, and in a most impressive form. To make a new religion



at the present day seems impossible. For this reason many cultivated men conform and are able to gather strength and hope from the services of the Christian Church. Whether this is the best course may of course be doubted, but many feel constrained to adopt it.

On one point—a matter of fact—I take leave to differ from you. You say the churches on the continent are empty or only filled with women. This is often said, but it does not correspond with my observation. It is true perhaps of Northern Germany, but not of Southern Germany, Austria or Italy—all of which I know well. The churches are full, especially at Christmas, Easter, etc., and men are almost as numerous as women. Of France I do not speak, as I know it less, but in Paris at Christmas the churches overflow.

Pardon me for troubling you with this long story ; but your paper interested me greatly.

**22.** Your paper has come to me after an unfortunate delay. Thank you so much for your kindness in sending it. It has given me keen delight and a really fresh hope for things in Cambridge. I believe the good effect of any one in your position speaking out the straight simple truth is simply incalculable, and I am sure there is not one of us who cares for truth who is not thanking you in their hearts. I have been often tempted to think that high official position inevitably blunted and blurred a man's sense of truth and his emotion towards it—and now I know that this need not be. I do not know which section of the community will be most grateful to you—the younger who wanted the help in honestly seeking for truth, or the older who lacked the courage to give that help. No one, I am sure, is more grateful to you than I am, for—being a born coward—I have often shrunk from facing what seemed a dead weight of adverse tradition.

**23.** —has shown me your recently printed pamphlet. I hope I do not take an undue liberty in writing to ask that, if you still have any copies to spare, you would have



the kindness to give me one. I should value it ; for it seems to me highly likely that so frank an expression of opinion may prove to constitute, in the history of Cambridge thought, an event no less epoch-making than Keble's sermon of 1833 was at Oxford.

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We have been much interested in your pamphlet "Prove all Things," and should be glad to know if copies may be anywhere obtained : we feel sure that many undergraduates would be glad if it were made accessible.

Apologising for troubling you

We are, yours truly

[Signed by 12 Undergraduates, not  
of Emmanuel, mostly Scholars.]

## PART II

### LETTERS FROM NON-RESIDENTS

1. I somehow want to say that, so far as my mental storeroom is concerned, your paper goes into the same pigeon-hole as the Athanasian Creed, another conspicuous example of pitiless logic applied to inadequate premisses. The one goes on the basis that the New Testament is in every detail an accurate record of the real experience of humanity and the other that it contains no new revelation at all of humanity's experience. I won't say which is which. Some day if I ever have the time I should like to deal with the points you raise from the point of view of the inductive philosopher. In some respects I think we are more fortunate than you critical historians. For my own part I find much curious enjoyment in trying to translate what the theologian or the preacher says into the language that I should naturally use myself. I nearly always find a translation possible, except for conceptions which belong to ecclesiasticism and which recall to my mind nothing but the tyranny which in the old days the man of science used to exercise in virtue of his little knowledge of the stars and the weather.

To your single principle I should certainly add two others, both of which, so far as I know, we owe to the New Testament. The first is the failure of egoism and the necessity for altruism as a guide to conduct; the second the reality of inspiration which shows itself in two forms, first the imperishable consciousness of the possibility of achievement (which you may call the principle of self-respect) and

secondly the capacity for making more of an idea than the originator meant or imagined, so that a form of words remains a living inspiration for ages. These added to your paramount sense of duty form a trinity of first principles—my clerical friends would of course be shocked to recognise it, but human nature is human nature and we are all fearfully and wonderfully alike. Add to this that the principle of immortality of consciousness cannot be excluded from the philosophical horizon on the ground that we cannot formulate the mechanism—the law of gravitation might be excluded for the same reason—and that as a working hypothesis in explanation of all the control of mechanical forces known as “will” it is as good as any other, for the present time—and I am bound to confess that what separates me from my orthodox clerical friends is or appears to me to be all human, and not a bit divine—and pitifully and transparently human like the Athanasian Creed, than which I never saw a more transparently human document. To me it is devoid of any single attribute of inspiration.

You will think I am trifling with the most serious of all subjects in amusing myself—if that is the right word—by making a paraphrase in my own language of words to which some attach such grim importance and disregarding all the human accretions, but I am not really. What is the use of preaching a sermon in English to a congregation that speaks Latin and does not understand even that?

2. Thank you for “Prove all Things.” You say “you will not agree with it.” I agree with a great deal of it, and with the spirit, the honest spirit, of the whole of it. Among other things I accept what you say (p. 13) that “the doctrine of Evolution has changed the point of view from which all educated men regard many of the most important dogmas of Christianity.” But it seems to me that the *truths* are not changed, only “the point of view.” So I accept both the “incarnation” and the “atonement,” but no longer as miracles, only as manifestations of spiritual law,

more "stupendous" than ever, but not—in the ordinary sense—miraculous.

Perhaps the point on which I differ from you most is the importance of (p. 15) "personal relation." The older I grow, the more I feel I am—if I may so express it—a bundle of personal relations, made up of parents, brothers, sisters, friends, schoolfellows, and others, living and dead ; and I have a stronger belief than ever in incarnations and atonements going on every day around me and for me.

Surely the doctrine of Evolution, like that of the best of the Hebrew prophets, ought to help us to say to one another *Θάψει*. Not that things will soon become better. Probably they will become worse before they are better. But I have faith in the end. Still I admit that the faith is of the nature of a conflict—not of a conflict with truth but with obstacles to truth which for a time appear to be forms of truth.

Excuse this maundering scrawl which I have half a mind to tear up, but I send it to thank you.

3. I have read through your Address, "Prove all Things," a second time and find it admirable both in what it says and what it leaves unsaid. Have you thought of sending copies of it to the Heads of Colleges at both Universities and of the great schools? If you saw your way to do this it might help some of those timid souls to emancipate themselves somewhat from the bondage in which they are held, mainly because they are unaware of the freedom of expression which is reached out of their hearing. For my part I thank you very sincerely for your outspokenness, which gives us who think with you—and I make bold to say we are all who have the courage to think honestly—a sense of freedom and relief, as if a window had been opened to the fresh air, though at the same time what you say is a severe reproof to pusillanimous reticence, of which I too have been guilty to my shame though in less degree than some others. Yet I am not without apprehension that there may be some who will blame you for choosing

the better part, and among them not a few who fear their material interests may suffer. If any such come my way they shall know my mind on the matter, which is not theirs.

Latterly I have been thinking that truth must be always but approximate at its best, of whatever it is affirmed, and transitory only. Heracleitus set all things in a flux, Plato looked anxiously about him for some salvage of truth and invented *ideas*, in which he thought he found fixity, or at any rate in the conclusion that natural kinds were immutable and permanent. This dam was swept away by Darwin and the evolutionary theory to the dismay of those who anchored by traditional dogmas. There was, however, left for them, they thought, the bed-rock of certainty in the immutable elements and self-similar indiscerptible atoms. But these the Cambridge physicists have broken up, it seems, and are showing to be commutable. If they prove right, then is our knowledge throughout but relative and for the moment, and there are for us no eternal truths. Paper and patience, your patience most I fear, are at an end.

4. I much appreciate your kind thought in sending me the paper and I have been reading it with interest and pleasure. It ought to be placed in the hands of all ministers and schoolmasters in the kingdom.

5. Thank you very much for the most interesting pamphlet which you have sent me. As it exactly reflects my views I need hardly say that I found the greatest pleasure in reading it.

I expect that in another generation these questions will be handled even in schools in the spirit of your address. At present I don't see what we can put before boys, to take the place of the old creed as a foundation for morality teaching.

6. Many thanks for your letter and the print of your paper which I have read with much interest. I am not a Gallio and I am not a bigot, but, though I have no wish to



indulge in a theological controversy, I really doubt whether it is wise to offer this meat to babes. I know the Universities are reeking with crude agnosticism already, but it is a very impressionable time for young men and the seeds sown at twenty-one are, as I know, deeply sown and in the later days when "the world is more and more" remain with us and are hard to eradicate. I am all for *independent* thought in these matters, but the sort of intellectual *ὑβρις* of the young is surely strengthened, and not to the advantage of its owner or the world, when it receives the official imprimatur of those whose knowledge and intellect they have learnt to admire. Unfaith is all so easy, faith so difficult, and stumblingblocks to faith are dangerous things to raise. Besides, after all, what do the best of us know? I don't like the facile assumption that so much of revealed religion cannot be accepted rationally or historically—the Virgin birth, the miracles, the resurrection and the rest. As to the latter I should have thought there is very strong historical evidence for it. It was always the cardinal basis of Christianity and how can the gradual and final acceptance of a view founded on that within a century or two by the Roman intellectual world be explained, if this could be as it might then easily have been demonstrated to be false? Surely this is a tremendous fact, and whether we accept the whole of the Gospel story or not, it would be an absolutely unique instance of a faith wholly based on error gradually dominating the world. Personally, though I speak as an ignoramus, I mistrust much of the modern criticism which paints your Nero and Tiberius white and explains away the excesses of the Borgias. And though "the rock" may not be as "impregnable" as we once thought, is not the supposed solvent itself much more evanescent? Where is the criticism of fifty years ago? Science, which was to explain everything, now stands mute before the absolute unknowable. One may admit much of your picture of modern infidelity, but does one not see signs of a reaction slowly maturing to revindicate the old faith, or so much as is worth preserving? "through

creeks and inlets spreading comes silent flooding in the main?" Anyhow one can only stretch lame hands of faith and dimly trust the larger hope.

7. Many thanks for sending me your paper. It is most stimulating, and I should have much liked to have been present at the discussion, though it would have been difficult to have focussed so large a field as is covered by the paper without more reflection than is possible at one sitting. Had I the time I should have liked to talk over many points. One point, however, stands out prominently, which is that the intellect, or the reason is given the final and dominant appeal. I felt this during a considerable period of my life, but I could not find it work. There is so much in our experience that goes beyond substantial proof, which is yet the highest in us. You speak of conscience—then the Unifying Life which lies behind all human conscience must be personal, and good, and loving, it must be communicable, and expressible in life, and the Christian creed presents me with a life, and the results of that life in history, which is still the most potent force in moral effort at work in the world, and I find a unity given to all life in the thought that all consciences reflect God the primal fount of conscience, and Holy Spirit the energy of conscience, and Christ the norm of conscience. Ethics alone I could not live by because they have no ultimate unity, which for man must be Personal. I am sure I live in a Higher and Larger life than my own, and so does all humanity—what can and what does Ethics tell me of that? This was what troubled me.

And can a living society exist and hold together in an Ethic, could the College find its fellowship in an Ethic, must it not find its unity in the Fountain of Life, which underlies each and all personal lives, and if this unity is found will it not lie in worship?

Thought may abstract God, but life needs Him somehow; at least this is my "reaction upon life."

8. It is with considerable diffidence that I write this letter but, as you have sent me your pamphlet and it appears to invite frankness, I feel constrained to speak out.

\* \* \* \*

I don't think you dons, who live a life of semi-seclusion, in which the temptations must be distinctly mild, realize what happens to a youngster when he goes out into the world with his religious principles gone.

I see you admire Germany. Yet twice within the last year old pupils who have been living over there have both said the same thing, viz. that they regard the Germans as the most despicable people; they both agreed that the *average* young German of to-day spends his leisure in getting drunk on beer and in debauchery. In fact having abandoned their religion they are reverting to the brute beast and this is precisely what my experience of the world would lead me to suppose. And that brings me to another point. If you left these youngsters till they were 35 and had seen something of life you wouldn't find it so easy to influence them, but of course coming straight up from school and regarding a don with a certain amount of reverence they swallow the agnostic reasoning, if it comes from you, and, excuse my saying it, I think it a distinct abuse of your position. You have no moral right to upset a boy's religious beliefs unless you have a higher religion to offer him and you have only nebulous philosophic theories to offer instead. Leave them, I say, to tackle the subject as men with men of equal age and if by the time they are 35 they have had dealings with as many agnostics as I have I think their experience of them will more than counterbalance any arguments that they can produce. I very much doubt whether there is half as much agnosticism about as you suppose. It seems to me it is mostly at the 'Varsities and until recently I had thought it was mostly at Oxford.

\* \* \* \*

9. Thank you very much for sending me your paper read to the Religious Discussion Society—if you did send it to me. I do not know what to say about it. It is very interesting and I am not clever enough to criticize it. It is good for us clerics to know what people like you are thinking. But it is astonishing to think how Cambridge has changed since my time. What should we have thought if a Master had read a paper like that to undergraduates? I see that you are as candid and outspoken as ever you were: and impatient of unreality. But I hope that things are not so impossible for a reasonable faith as you paint them. After all, the main facts you speak of have been known for a good long time and many first-rate men have still honestly believed in Christianity.

I am inclined to be a "broad" Churchman. I still believe in the Incarnation and the Resurrection and I do not see at present that criticism makes that belief unreasonable. But I do not for a moment want to argue with you. Only in thanking you for the paper I feel bound to say so much.

10. I am grateful to you for sending me a copy of your paper "Prove all Things" although it awakens in me many disquieting thoughts. All that you say about the general revolt against old-fashioned orthodoxy—about the feeling of unrest and uncertainty in the religious world—about the growing indifference—is painfully interesting. And if I were to give you the result of my own experience in a country village it would only add strength to your general statement. And yet I remain orthodox—doomed according to your prediction (p. 14) to occupy, if I am alive in a few years time, a very unenviable position. I still cling to the "life that is kindled by the belief in a personal relation to a divine man."

I can give you no explanation that would satisfy you why I am sincerely interested in your indisputable statement and yet am able to remain in my orthodoxy with what appears to you to be its inevitable outlook of gloom and loneliness.



11. Absence from London has prevented me from acknowledging the receipt of your paper sooner. I was called over to Belfast to open a medical discussion and have just returned.

I have read your scholarly and temperate address over twice, and each time with the greatest interest and pleasure. It is an able exposition of the view many of us hold but could not have so well expressed.

12. — has sent me his copy of your address to the Religious Discussion Society which has deeply interested me. Of course there is nothing new in it but it is a clear and eloquent statement of facts familiar to those who have the will to learn. But it has an additional importance as the utterance of one who holds a high influential position in the University and as such is itself a sign of the extraordinary change which has come over the religious world in the last few years.

How helpful would such a society as this have been to me when fifty years ago I was an intellectually wild undergraduate, recklessly πάντα δοκιμάζων and finding no good to hold fast to till in very despair I submitted to Rome.

One criticism I will venture. It is on the words you adopt as to the moral sense οὐδεὶς οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου φάνη. I have often preached this but in late years I begin to doubt. Is not the moral sense due to a sub-consciousness of a unity under multitudinous individualities—the member's dim consciousness of the body? Thence comes the perception, which according to Jesus is the whole law, of obligation to love the whole and each part.

But will you kindly let me have a copy of your address?

13. I have just had lent to me your paper on "Prove all Things" and have returned it to my friend with the *greatest reluctance*. It would be a real kindness if you could supply me with *one* copy at least and with as many more as you can spare. I presume these are not "on sale,"



but if they *are* I will pay any sum for 20 copies you like to name. Meanwhile, as my excuse for this intrusion, let me say how delighted and how *thankful to God* am I for this most timely and priceless essay.

If I may further trespass on your indulgence, let me offer for your kind acceptance the enclosed two or three pamphlets and a small parcel of books in case you feel interested in my work. Our Church has for 38 years followed the lines and principles you have laid down in your Essay. I feel sure that the Freemasonry existing between all real lovers of Truth and Sincerity will enable you to give a kind greeting to this letter.



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